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UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: draft resolution

Assistance to Palestine refugees

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 51/124 of 13 December 1996 and all its previous resolutions on the question, including resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948,

Taking note of the report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East covering the period from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997,[1]

Welcoming the signature in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993 by the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the people of Palestine, of the Declaration of Principles on

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* Reissued for technical reasons.

[1] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 13 (A/52/13).

Interim Self-Government Arrangements[2] and the subsequent implementation agreements, and also the signature of the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in Washington, D.C., on 28 September 1995,

Encouraging the Multilateral Working Group on Refugees of the Middle East peace process to continue its important work,

Welcoming also the completion of the transfer of the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to Gaza to its area of operations,

1. Notes with regret that repatriation or compensation of the refugees, as provided for in paragraph 11 of its resolution 194 (III), has not yet been effected and that, therefore, the situation of the refugees continues to be a matter of concern;

2. Expresses its thanks to the Commissioner-General and to all the staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, recognizing that the Agency is doing all it can within the limits of available resources, and also expresses its thanks to the specialized agencies and to private organizations for their valuable work in assisting refugees;

3. Notes with regret that the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine has been unable to find a means of achieving progress in the implementation of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and requests the Commission to exert continued efforts towards the implementation of that paragraph and to report to the Assembly as appropriate, but not later than 1 September 1998;

4. Notes the significant success of the Peace Implementation Programme of the Agency since the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements,[2] and stresses the importance that contributions to this Programme are not at the expense of the General Fund;

5. Welcomes strengthened cooperation between the Agency and the World Bank and other specialized agencies, and calls upon the Agency to make a decisive contribution towards giving a fresh impetus to the economic and social stability of the occupied territories;

6. Urges all Member States to extend and expedite aid and assistance with a view to the economic and social development of the Palestinian people and the occupied territories;

7. Reiterates its deep concern regarding the persisting critical financial situation of the Agency, as outlined in the report of the Commissioner-General;

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[2] A/48/486-S/26560, annex; see Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-eighth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1993, document S/26560.

8. Commends the efforts of the Commissioner-General to move towards budgetary transparency and internal efficiency, and hopes that such moves will continue;

9. Notes with profound concern that the structural deficit problem confronting the Agency portends an almost certain decline in the living conditions of the Palestine refugees and that it, therefore, has possible consequences for the peace process;

10. Calls upon all Governments, as a matter of urgency, to make the most generous efforts possible to meet the anticipated needs of the Agency, and urges non-contributing Governments to contribute regularly and encourages contributing Governments to consider increasing their regular contributions.